

Borne the Battle

Episode # 128

Angela Peacock, Kyle Venable and Carlos Caro – Student Veteran of the Year finalists

<https://www.blogs.va.gov/VAntage/55518/student-veteran-angela-peacock-kyle-venable-and-carlos-caro/>

(Text Transcript Follows)

[00:00:00] Music

[00:00:11] OPENING MONOLOGUE:

Timothy Lawson (TL): Thursday, January 10, 2019, this is *Borne the Battle* brought to you by the department of Veterans' Affairs. I am your host, Marine Corps Veteran, Timothy Lawson. This is the third installment-I guess third in a series- of episodes featuring Student Veteran of the Year finalists. Tomorrow we will speak with the Student Veteran of the Year winner. The individual who is officially named Student Veteran of the Year. But today, three more Student Veteran of the Year finalists talking about a big win they had in 2018 at their respective chapters, their philosophy on outreach, how they got Veterans to both be inspired to do things, to show interest in doing things, but also to getting them to commit to participating and then also the balance of things they did on campus versus off campus to get their student Veterans and other members of their campus to participate. Another great conversation for anybody who is invested in a student Veteran chapter at their local university or college or someone who wants to help support these groups. A lot of great inside information in this. Today's group conversation includes: Angela Peacock, Kyle Venable, Carlos Caro. Enjoy.

[00:01:30] Music

[00:01:38] PSA:

Man 1: I served in Vietnam.

Man 2: I served in World War II.

Woman: I served in Afghanistan.

Man 1: And V.A. serves us all.

Man 2: No matter when you served.

Woman: No matter if you saw combat or not.

Man 1: There are benefits for Veterans of every generation.

Woman: See what V.A. can do for you.

Narrator: To learn what benefits you may be eligible for, visit www.va.gov. That's www.va.gov.

[00:02:00] Music

[00:02:08] INTERVIEW:

(TL): Alright, the final three I've spoken to. Technically, I've only spoken to six others of you. There was a seventh elusive...

Unknown: [Laughter]

(TL): ... finalist that we couldn't get down in a chair but let me tell you the... I got to speak to all ten finalists last year, as well, and now I've spoken to essentially ten of you again this year, and it is... It has blown me away at the level of inspiration that we find within each class of Student Veteran of the Year finalists. And I think it is uhm. . . it's so important that while we recognize what we did in the service, while we talk about how we're managing our transition, that it is just equally as important to make sure-remind everybody- this is what Veterans are doing after their military service. I always joke around with some of my friends, telling... Like, it drives me nuts when people ask me about my life, and I give the synopsis of it, and I tell them like, "I did this, and this, and this, and the military, and this, and this, and this." And the only thing they remember is, "Oh, you were in the service? Oh, thank you for... You were in the military? Thank you for your service."

Unknown: Yeah.

(TL): And it's like, did you not hear the other...

Everyone: [Laughter]

(TL): ... like nine things I rattled off?

Unknown: Right.

(TL): That stuff is way cooler than... [Laughter] You know?

Carlos Caro (CC): Yeah you do podcasts.

(TL): Yeah, exactly, yeah. So, you know, that's... So I say that as in like that's much my motivation here is to not only talk about the cool things that you guys are doing on campus, but a lot of the people that listen to this series of podcasts, the ones that come out of the NatCon are student Veterans and people who are uh... and faculty that are on campus that want to know how to sort of serve student Veterans. So that's the value we're looking for out of today. Angela, we'll start with you. Looking for, you know, name, university, branch of service. You know, the short bio.

Angela Peacock (AP): My name is Angela Peacock. I am a second-year Master's in social work candidate at Washington University in St. Louis, and I served about seven years in the Army.

(TL): Very well, welcome. Kyle?

Kyle Venable (KV): My name's Kyle Venable from Auburn University. I'm a senior information systems management. I served almost 17 years in the Marine Corps.

(TL): Semper fi.

(KV): Semper fi.

(TL): Carlos?

(CC): I'm Carlos Caro from Texas A&M University at Galveston. My major is marine transportation, so it fits pretty well with the fact I was in the Navy. I'm the chapter president at my campus, that's me.

(TL): Very well, did I get roles on campus...

(KP): No I forgot. [Laughter]

(TL): ...of your chapter yet? What's your role at your chapter?

(KP): I'm the president of the Washington University Student Veterans' Association.

(TL): Very cool. Did we get that out of you?

(KV): And I'm the president of the Auburn University Student Veterans' Association.

(TL): Ok, very good. Uhm naturally... Well something I've noticed this year... Usually it is presidents that uh... But we got a chief of staff and I think we even have an outreach chair, I think, that might have been—but, yeah, it's cool to see other roles in the chapter getting these sorts...

Unknown: Yeah.

(TL): ...of recognition. So, Angela, we'll start with you. Let's talk about outreach, let's talk about- uhm- you take a leadership role in the chapter and now it's about making sure that the Veterans on campus are aware that the chapter exists and that they understand what the value is in it if they want to be a part of it. How did you guys go about that?

(KP): So, I've been working with student Veteran organizations since 2011. So, I've been at community college level, undergraduate level where it's night and evening, and then now I'm at the graduate level.

(TL): Yeah.

(KP): So, I've noticed that each population needs different things-

(TL): Sure.

(KP): -so I think it's really important to find out the pulse of the campus that you live in, the kind of students, the kind of degrees, and what each place needs. So, at the graduate level, what we do now is like we just do a different variety of events to appeal to a wider audience. So that there's like fun things that we really want to get. Like, we're doing axe throwing in January-

(TL): [Laughter]

Unknown: That's pretty great.

(KP): We're doing paintball. Like what Veteran doesn't want to throw an axe? Like that has got to be like a membership drive [Laughter]...

Unknown: That's awesome.

(KP): ...You got to be creative...

Unknown: That's pretty cool.

(KP): ... But then, we also have a 5K run where we have the community come out for Veteran's Day. We've done huge things with like Senator McCaskill, Senator Duckworth, things like that. And then we have career development. We did LinkedIn; we did a pilot program with LinkedIn...

(TL): Hmm.

(KP): ...And uhm, S.V.A. So we did LinkedIn training and a 'vetworking' event. So, we try to just cover all bases: career and professional development, fun is absolutely necessary, a little bit of physical activity. You know, a little bit of everything.

(TL): Sure. Kyle how are you guys approaching outreach?

(KV): Well one of the programs we started this year is the A.W.O.L. program: Auburn Warrior Orientation and Learning. So, you know, they have the Warrior's Scholar program; we kind of took bits and pieces of it. We didn't have... You know, it's hard for someone to give up two weeks or a week of their time-

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): -before school starts. So our students that are coming in, you know, uh... Transfer students or first-year Veterans coming into the school. We try to get them through our program. Hey, I can sit with 18- to 22-year-old students and learn, 'Hey the football stadium's over here; these are the chants they say whenever we score.' You know, those kind... Veterans really don't care about that stuff. We want to know: 'Hey take this professor not that professor', 'How do I navigate the school?', those kinds of things. 'What's a good place in town to live?', 'Where should I live that my family will be safe', things like that. So, we try to take that into account and that's lead all by our student Veterans. We take pride in teaching ourselves. I mean, Veterans, you know, we

want to each, you know, I can probably... They can probably say the same things that, you know, we want to teach ourselves. And we want to make our Veteran buddies next to us all successful. So that's one of our biggest programs that we started this year. But, I mean, like Angela said, we have a myriad of different things. We got with the University of Alabama this year and we did the Iron Bull Ruck March, you know. It's a huge football game in the southeast...

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): ...maybe the country.

(TL): I've heard of it.

(KV): 150 miles in three days, so 50 miles per day, seven-mile sticks. Three-uh- seven-mile, yeah, sticks, three different sticks. March seven, sleep for seven, then help support for seven.

(TL): Okay.

(KV): So it's a very very beneficial. The main goal of it was to raise awareness for the 22 per day. We had 22-pound packs, and the packs were loaded with items to donate to the Bill Nichols State Veterans Home, which is between the two schools.

(TL): Okay.

(KV): We found that. But something that came out of it that was not, you know, that we didn't think of, was so many Veterans came up to us like, "Man I needed this. This gave me that 'back-to-military'... You know, it gave me that feeling that I was in a family that belonged again," you know, "This is the coolest thing that I've done since I've been out of the military," and those types of things. You know, we try to so many things that can bring the family together so...

(TL): Yeah, absolutely. Carlos, I know that you're not on the main campus at A&M, so I'm kind of curious both how you're approaching it on the campus that you're at and what sort of collaboration you have with the people at the main campus.

(CC): Right, so, yeah we have a pretty interesting college at Galveston. We're specifically maritime-based, so basically everybody at our school is either studying marine science, marine transportation, marine

engineering, ocean costal research. So, essentially, we're pretty small. We have about 2,500 students; we're all aggies. So gig 'em.

(TL): Gig 'em.

(CC): Yeah. But, as far as getting out, you know, getting participation is pretty easy for me. Because it's 2,500; I have about 150 Veterans at my campus. Participation-wise, we got about 35 people every week at our meetings.

(TL): That's good.

(CC): Yes.

(TL): That's good turnout.

(CC): And that's free lunch every week. You'll be surprised at how much. . .

(TL): Ah, free food is everything.

(CC): You offer free food on a college campus... I'm telling you, your student organization is gonna be outstanding.

(KV): Yep.

(CC): Yeah, so we have about 35 participating members every week. Our meetings are pretty much 35 and up, no matter what. As far as collaborating with College Station... The 150 miles is a distance however we have to go up there for football games. We do tailgating with them, but that 150-mile distance does kind of put a border on us.

(TL): Yeah that's difficult. I mean, you're talking about 150 miles. I mean, in D.C., George Washington University and George Town were a few miles down the road, and it was difficult for us to get collab- I mean, it's different schools, but you know we had relationships with them, but it was so difficult to collaborate just because having to go from one campus to another is always just uh. . . it's a difficult thing to accomplish sometimes.

(CC): Right. And one of the main things that we've done at our campus while I've been in S.V.A. leadership was we actually have the V.S.O. office send their liaison at least once a semester down to Galveston campus to talk to our Veterans, to talk to our students, even our dependents,

and see how everything is going. To check up on us, make sure that everything is okay, because everything is handled at main campus. So, as a satellite school, you would have your own V.S.O. office. As a campus, you don't have that V.S.O. office. So we made sure, at least when I was a sophomore, I made sure that we needed that liaison to come down, check up on us, and basically represent main campus at Galveston campus.

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): So that's something I'm specifically proud of and has helped us a lot.

(TL): Yeah, very cool. Free food is everything. I remember, like, even just as a student, me and one of my friends like, we had this policy. If we were walking around and saw a handful of people walking around with food that we were confident didn't come from the cafeteria, we'd immediately start tracing that line of like, "Where is this coming from and are we allowed to access this food?"

(CC): Popsicles...

(KV): Yes.

(CC): ...Pizza. . .

(TL): Yeah, oh my goodness. Yeah I'm interested in whatever club this is. Yeah that'd be great. Uhm, a question that I forgot to ask at the top and want to make sure I don't forget, and Carlos we'll start with you and go back around. Tell us about a big win you guys had in 2018 that your chapter had.

(CC): 2018. Oh, man. Early registration, priority registration for Veterans on campus.

(TL): That's awesome. That's amazing.

(CC): Yes, we finally... Actually it was a very long process that started in 2016 and it got finalized in 2018 at main campus. So that was a huge deal for us because any type of student government legislation that affects our campus has to go through our main campus. So it actually started as a grass roots movement back in Galveston campus, and we started pitching it as a time management tool for student Veterans that need early registration- priority registration- to better facilitate their

schedule, their classes, graduate on time, and also for their benefits, of course. So yeah, we started that in 2016. Got finally, it got passed in Galveston campus in 2017 and finally in 2018, College Station sent their student government down to us and we told them about it. 2018, it managed to get passed for Texas A&M University.

(TL): That's amazing.

(CC): Huge win,...

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): ... huge win.

(TL): Especially when you consider it: how many Veterans have families and children and jobs, right? They come out and, you know, the G.I. Bill is nice but, you know, a lot of people in some areas, you can't just live off the G.I. Bill. Especially if you're going to school in Manhattan or something like that, right? Like you need- a lot of them get part-time jobs and stuff like that and I think just being, just having that one little benefit- being able to form your class schedule just a little bit ahead of everybody else gives Veterans the opportunity to have an easier transition and a better quality of life. So that's huge.

(CC): Yeah.

(TL): Kyle, what did you guys do?

(KV): Well we've been established for a while, since 2009. So we already had the priority registration; we have a lot of stuff done through the administration. So our next thing was, like you were just saying, how do we help the student Veteran with that family? How do we help the ones that are struggling to make end's meet? We put together our Veterans' gala. So we invite community members, you know, Veteran supporters, and as many student Veterans as we can to this. And we always have a- this was our third annual- but it was our biggest because we pushed it so hard this year. But we always have this uhm. . . Veteran that comes and speaks. This year we had Melissa Stockwell come and speak.

(TL): Oh!

(KV): She was very inspirational.

(TL): Yeah, very cool.

(KV): So she came and spoke, but we were able to give six \$2,000 scholarships to student Veterans from our organization which, you know,...

(TL): That's incredible.

(KV): ... it doesn't sound like much that much...

(TL): No, it's incredible.

(KV): ...to some people. But, I mean, once those people get that in their pocket and can pay tuition, or those type of things. If they're... We have one guy that is an employee of the university and he just always has that need because he's got a family; he's adopted three or four kids. You know, those kinds of things. And I'm like, "Man you're doing amazing things." He goes to American University and Auburn University. I mean, he's just taking all these...

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): ...classes and uhm. . .

(TL): That's amazing.

(KV): And so, he really appreciated the help from us. I mean, he earned it from what he does in my book. So it's just amazing to be able to give that money back to student Veterans.

(TL): That's incredible. American University, we, our group had barely had enough to pay for free pizza. We got it, we got the free- we bought the pizza to provide free pizza, but that was about as much as our budget would be able to handle. Angela, what was a big win for you in 2018?

(AP): I can think of like three, so I'll. . . I think the biggest one was probably our school hired a previous W.U. Vets member because the previous leadership...

(TL): W.U. Vets.

(AP): W.U. Vets.

(TL): I like that.

(AP): We call ourselves W.U.V ets. The last two and three years we've advocated at the school to get more support because it's just like military was not existent. We didn't know who each other were or anything. So, they hired a previous W.U. Vets. member to be the Director of the Office of Military and Veteran Services. So now we have an official office, we have support, they have practicum students that work there. And then the second win- I just can't go by without mentioning- is...

(TL): Please.

(AP): ... we did a student Veterans' week in St. Louis, so we brought together all campuses.

(TL): That's awesome.

(AP): We had seven schools participate.

(TL): That's a huge win.

(AP): Huge win.

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): Awesome.

(AP): And that was actually my internship was to do this as a project. So the Wash. U. event had about a 115 corporate partners, community members. We trained student Veterans from seven different universities about LinkedIn and then we did a networking event after. But it was just really cool to see the community, and the school, and the different universities all come together in one place at the same time.

(TL): Yeah.

(Unknown): That's awesome.

(AP): So it was really cool.

(TL): That's a huge win.

(Unknown): Yeah.

(TL): Getting multiple campuses in an area to collaborate on something?

(AP): Yes.

(TL): There's student Veterans banging their head because it's... You hear about how, "oh we want to work with the local...

(AP): Yeah.

(TL): ...campuses, the other groups". You hear the conversations, you hear them happen at NatCon.

(AP): Yeah.

(TL): The following year, you hear they couldn't pull it together...

(KV): Same.

(TL): ...because it was difficult to get people organized...

(AP): Yeah.

(TL): ... So that's a huge win.

(AP): Huge, I mean and we think it's important that... Like I was a community college student, and I never thought I could go...

(Unknown): Yeah.

(AP): ...to like a really prestigious university...

(TL): Right.

(AP): ...and get a scholarship. Like I didn't think that existed, so in St. Louis, there's so many colleges; we want you to stay in St. Louis, we want you to go from community college, to an undergraduate, to a graduate school, and get that scholarship that you wanted. But if we are not

collaborating, how are the community college students going to know that?

(TL): Yeah.

(AP): Student Veterans don't know. And then it also drives the membership for each university when they see this huge week of events. Like, "Oh I want to go to this, I want to go to that." And, you know. Really cool.

(TL): I promise you, that if you wrote a one-pager after-action on some of the key things that made that work and sent it up to S.V.A, that, you know...

(AP): I did a ten-page after action.

(TL): Perfect. Okay.

(AP): Yeah. [Laughter]

(TL): Ten-page after action...

(Unknown): Oh wow.

(TL): ...Never mind. Over achiever over here...

(Unknown): That's great.

(AP): Sorry. [Laughter]

(TL): [Laughter] Oh my goodness.

(AP): It was my internship, you know?

(TL): Yeah, no, that's very good. Good. I'm glad to hear it. Those are all huge moments that I know so many chapters have a difficult time getting, so that's good to hear. Kyle, we'll come back to you on participation. You're a well-established group. It sounds like you have a good participation. But when it comes- going from like interest to idea, interest to actually being involved, how do you get Veterans to commit that way?

(KV): It's, that's the key question right there is, "How do you keep them?" I mean, it just depends on the events. I mean we have golf tournaments that we get people out of the woodworks for. You know, when we have these golf tournaments, including the basketball coach of Auburn. He'll have his golf tournament and he'll go, "Hey I want two student Veteran teams. Give me eight student Veterans to play." I have no problem filling that. You know, but if we put something together where we're gonna stuff backpacks for needy kids or something, and we do it as a group, we might have 14 people show up instead of 40...

(TL): Sure.

(KV): ...that we really want to be out there. It's just, uh... We try to find events that will key on. We've done so many now that we try to find something that keys on the Veterans that are in school right now, uhm, that we have come to know. Something that keys on their interest. A lot right now are with sports.

(TL): Sure.

(KV): Golf... 5Ks are really big and we do collaborations with like the R.O.T.C.s. They have a huge 5K, so we get involved with them helping with their 5K. The Student Nursing Association does a 5K; we get involved with them, help them. So, we try to find something that we know student Veterans like to do, but we also... I mean, you can't... Not every one is a win.

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): So we do have those ones where, you know, "Let's put together a bowling night." That sounds very fun and then you get five or six people show up. We're still in, we still have those problems, also.

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): It's never fixed.

(TL): Yeah, this is always an important question for me to ask in these conversations because when I was president of American University, we had a little bit of trouble with getting people to commit to doing... So, finally I was like, "What do you want to do?..."

(KV): Yeah.

(TL): ...Let's get the one thing you all want to do and make that happen."

(KV): Yeah.

(TL): And everybody is like, "You know what? A social happy hour. We're in D.C. let's just go find somewhere to hangout for a night or whatever." Great. One of the Veterans was a bartender at a local... And so like he worked with his manager, they had a little section set aside for us, the Veteran was the bartender for that time...

(KV): Nice.

(TL): ...They brought out appetizers for us. 13 people, I had a Facebook event page set up for it, and 13 people said they were going. Can anybody guess how many showed up?

(AP): Six. It's always 50 percent no-show rate.

(TL): It was zero percent this time.

(AP): Oh no!

[Laughter]

(Unknown): Wow.

(TL): Not one person showed up, and I was like, "Why. . .?" So finally I get into this text storm of fury of like, "Where is everybody? Nobody is here." Finally about an hour, hour and a half later, people started showing up, long after the embarrassing no-show, right? And I was like, "Why?" and when I got back to campus I was asking people...

(CC): ...It's what you wanted.

(TL): Yeah. "Why would you say you're going if you're not gonna show up?" "Oh I thought it looked good to show that people were going." Well, no, it doesn't look good when no one shows up.

(AP): [Laughter]. Oh my god.

(TL): Like the manager at the bar was gonna be like, "Oh but, okay, you had a good response on Facebook. I see here."

(CC): Yeah.

(AP): [Laughter].

(CC): Yeah.

(TL): So I always want to have this conversation because I know we all have those moments. You mentioned free food. What other tactics are you taking?

(CC): Oh, it's so difficult because that's the biggest promise, you know. Everybody is going to show up to the meeting, everybody's gonna discuss, everybody's gonna be informed because of the free food. Thanks- thank you to our campus so much for that. But it's so difficult because you don't want to turn into a drinking club...

(TL): Right.

(CC): ...which is what everybody wants to go do, which we're already— everybody is already close friends and you're already hitting the scene after...

(TL): Sure.

(CC): ...on Fridays, Thursdays, Saturday nights. Yeah, you don't want that.

(KV): Right.

(CC): So it's extremely difficult, but I really put an emphasis on culinary culture. We're in Galveston campus, crawfish boil.

(TL): Mmm.

(CC): Bring the families.

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): It's not, it's gender inclusive to everyone. One of my biggest struggles is trying to get the females and the women on my campus to come and participate with us just because it's kind of a boys' club...

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): ...at the end of the day. There's... It's just extremely overpopulated with the male component. However, crawfish boils, community service events where we can bring the kids, bring the wives, bring the husbands, bring your partners, whoever, whatever family, and that really helps. And the food, of course, so our crawfish boil is huge.

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): Our faculty comes, people from the community come, and most, that's our biggest event is our annual crawfish boil, and that's just because mainly we ensure to include the families, and yeah.

(TL): Yeah, oddly enough getting faculty participation was just as much of a struggle for us.

(KV): Yeah.

(TL): We'd invite them to meetings and events and stuff like that. Like, "Come..." And there was only a couple times where we'd have an open house or something like that where they would like swing through to say 'hi' to the Veterans. Yeah, we'd invite a bunch of our professors and be like, "Hey, come by and meet the Veterans on your campus." And it was difficult to get the- but, you know, from campus to campus the demand on both students and faculty is different.

(KV): Except for that once-a-year Veterans' Day meal offered to faculty.

(TL): Oh.

(KV): That brings everybody.

(Everyone): [Laughter]

(TL): Oh yeah, all of a sudden they're interested. Yeah, that's great. Angela, how is your chapter inspiring commitment and getting people to follow through?

(AP): I think it's all about relationships that if you're fun people to be around, people want to be around.

(TL): Yeah.

(AP): You know? So, we really try to focus on like, kind of like you said earlier about your school where we do one big thing per semester, but then we have little, smaller engagements so that everybody wants to participate in the big thing because they have met us in the smaller things. So we'll do like a kick off barbeque for the fall. And that like brings all the families in and everybody gets to meet.

(TL): Sure.

(AP): Who's the faculty... We piggy-back with orientation so that they meet, they get all the questions answered, but then you also get to meet the student Veterans and hang out and have a good time. So usually, I mean, I think the relationships is what carries us through in membership.

(TL): Yeah. Yeah, I'm curious what your balance is, especially on a bigger... Like a huge campus like Auburn. How much of your events are in-house and how many things are you doing off campus? I noticed that, uhm, doing anything off campus was like... I mean, I just banged my head against a wall trying to figure out what to do. The one thing that I did that was very successful was I had a really short speaker series. Found a Veteran in the community that was- had a profession people were interested in, or we had members from Team Rubicon would show up, and they'd come in, and we'd have a little bit of food, and a lot of people showed up to that. As soon as you try to inspire people to go off campus, it just became impossible to get people to commit. Curious, especially on a big campus like Auburn, what your balance was on on-campus and off-campus activities.

(KV): For any kind of support and everything, I mean we did almost everything on campus. I live 45 minutes away; I live in Montgomery, which is a 52-mile drive. Uhm. So for me, you know, being at every event it just takes that commitment, so I try to do everything either within school hours or right after. That way, we could get that participation. But if we do anything off campus, once people go to their homes...

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): ...and stuff, nobody wants to come back, you know, and go to other places. So we just found the participation levels to be smaller whenever you do those things. We did the trampoline park one day. We have 78 members right now and I think we had 14 people show up.

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): You know, the same thing like I said about the bowling, you know. The smaller thing, I think, once you get people off campus, getting people back together is just very hard.

(TL): But, yeah. You're absolutely right. Nontraditional students of any sort, once they leave campus, they're back into their personal lives, right?

(KV): That's right.

(TL): They're not... It's not like where you're done with work, you go to barracks and you're natureally all right there to do...

(KV): Right.

(TL): ...something, right? You all leave and then have to regroup somewhere and that becomes really difficult, especially as adults. Being on a smaller campus, being one of the quote-end-quote "other" campuses of the university, how is that for you?

(CC): Most of our events are off campus.

(TL): Okay.

(CC): It's, basically we're on a small island, so it's really easy for people to commute and get to our events. But we do have a lot of on-campus events that we basically do it once a year. The Murph Workout: that's a Student Veterans'-sponsored event, and we get participation from the entire student body. A lot of people attend. So, yeah, we're on campus and we're off campus, but it's really because we're on a small island...

(TL): Yeah.

(CC): ...Galveston. And we can just. . . People come.

(TL): Sure.

(CC): It's very very quick.

(TL): Angela what's that balance like for you?

(AP): I don't know you guys are making me nervous about axe throwing. I thought, I thought, "Come on this has gotta be. . ."

[Laughter]

(TL): People gotta show up for that.

(AP): They got to. Come on. Don't you think? This is good. Part of...

(CC): That's awesome.

(KV): Absolutely, yeah.

(TL): I can tell you right now. I could organize an axe throwing event in D.C. next week and...

(KV): 40, 50 people.

(TL): ...yeah, I'd get a bunch of people.

(AP): All of a sudden?

(TL): Yeah it'd take up, I'm sure it'd fill up the roster real quick.

(KV): Yeah.

(AP): Yeah but, no, mostly we do them on campus, too. The only thing, I mean, even our 5K was right on campus so on a weekend.

(TL): Yeah.

(AP): I mean graduate students it's just like tough, in general, because they have families, jobs, internships. I mean I can think of the law school. All they do is read. So it's hard to get those guys to do anything, you know? Just do what you can.

(TL): Yeah, Angela, what sort of -uh- how do you guys connect with the other military-connected students: R.O.T.C., dependents, spouses? What sort of involvement do you have from them?

(AP): So, we have R.O.T.C. on our campus and I believe the whole battalion for the St. Louis area is on our campus, so we do communicate with

them. They participated in our Veterans' Day recognition ceremony. It was pretty cool to like mentor them a little bit. They would ask us really cool, you know, really curious questions about like 'what is it really like?' and that kind of stuff. So we try to be there for the R.O.T.C. guys. We're very family-inclusive. Like if you're not talking to the Veteran's family, you're missing a huge part of their life. So our faculty has been really responsive, the Military Veterans' Services Office, also there's a Veteran Ally program where they kind of teach staff and faculty about what is a student Veteran. Like, 'if you've met one, you've met one' because we're all so different. And so that's kind of like bridged the gap also. So we have a lot of faculty on our membership roster. They come to events; it's cool, you know?

(TL): Yeah. Great.

(AP): I think we're bridging that gap.

(TL): Yeah, Carlos what do you guys have on other military-connected students?

(CC): At Galveston, our student Veterans Association teams up with our future military leaders of America, which is an N.R.O.T.C. unit, and we basically mentor these guys. They know that a lot of us were in the Navy, the Marine Corps, which is mainly where they're going...

(TL): Yeah

(CC): ...so they seek our guidance, they want that leadership, they want to hear about our stories. So one of the things I did in 2018 that was huge was we were part of their Lead Lab, which every Friday, the N.R.O.T.C. unit has a Lead Lab. And they invited us to go and tell them our stories, our experiences on leadership, good and bad, because, as you all know, there's definitely some toxic leadership in the military, and it's huge. And I really want to reiterate to anybody that's listening: team up with these R.O.T.C. units, go and tell them your experiences, tell them your stories, tell them about the great leadership that you had, tell them about the bad -negative- leadership that you had. They need to know because these are going to be our military leaders or military commanders of the future, and you're there on campus with them. You have that same culture. So team up with them. And that's what we did with 2018, but we've built a really strong connection with the N.R.O.T.C. unit at Galveston, and we just team up for community

service events. Uhm. Even just for fun, they come and help us with our events. So, yeah, that's how mainly we reach out to that community.

(TL): Yeah, Kyle what's it look like at Auburn?

(KV): For us well, I mean, same thing with the N.R.O.T.C. It's very easy because our director, he's been there two years now, he came over from- when he retired, he retired as the N.R.O.T.C. commander- so it was easy for us to make that connection. We already had the, you know, we had the connection with the A.M.O.I. there and M.O.I., and those folks. We knew the Marines, we knew the Navy. The Air Force has still been a challenge just because of their leadership that they have in place there. He expects them to go to class, and get their degree, and everything else is up to them.

(TL): Yeah.

(KV): You know, so we try to reach out, and we try to do mentoring. With the Navy we do, and the Marines. We do fireside chats once a month with them. Uhm. They'll invite just either a Marine or a Navy that were, you know, staff N.C.O.s usually just to come, like Carlos was saying, you know, give those tips, "Hey be this guy, don't be that guy." Those kinds of things that, you know, that you don't want to have. The Army they just went over through some new leadership over there. We had a pretty good relationship. We're working on it now with the new leadership there because we have people from every branch; we have Coastguard in our Student Veterans Association. So we have every branch, so we want to reach out and make those connections. I mean, I think they're very important. Uhm, family members are kind of the same. Uhm. You know, we have a lot of spouses that are students, also, from the, you know, our. . . Fort Benning is right down- it's about 45 minutes from us- so spouses from Fort Benning come to Auburn and they're always welcome in our association. In one of the general meetings yesterday, we were talking about, you know, that's a great way to get membership is include other people. We try to include whoever we can; any Veteran supporter is allowed to join the Student Veterans Association at Auburn. So we try to make it all-inclusive.

(TL): Yeah, very cool. Angela, Ky—Kyle, I almost said Kyla, going into Carlos. Angela, Kyle, Carlos, thank you so much for joining me and helping inform not only student Veterans who are listening, but also members of those communities on what they can possibly do to help support the

Student Veterans chapters that are at a campus near them, so I really appreciate you taking the time to do this.

(CC): Thank you.

(KV): Thank you.

(AP): Thank you so much for having us.

[00:32:51] Music